



## **Ernest R. Dickie**

**(1902-1955)**

### **2014 Inductee from Mining's Past**

General Manager, Bagdad Copper

Ernest Russell Dickie was the energetic general manager who overcame many obstacles to bring Bagdad Copper from a marginal underground mine to a successful open pit operation.

Dickie was born in Colorado near Cripple Creek but spent most of his life in Arizona, at Jerome, Oatman, Wickenburg, and Bagdad. In Wickenburg, while serving as mayor and working at the Vulture Mine, he became associated with John C. Lincoln, who also had interests in the Vulture. When Lincoln acquired control of Bagdad Copper Co. in 1945, he appointed Dickie to run the operation.

Dickie quickly realized that the ore body was not suitable for underground mining and immediately implemented plans to convert it to open pit. This conversion was accomplished despite shortages of materials, limited manpower as well as infrastructure challenges in a remote area. Bagdad became the first converted mine when World War II ended, ahead of the better publicized Inspiration and Ray mines.

In 1950, comparative tests were conducted on four open pit haulage trucks, two from each of the two major manufacturers. Based on tests at Bagdad, he persuaded the truck manufacturers to adopt twin-disk torque converter transmission for heavy duty trucks. The Tournarocker, a 35-ton capacity earthmover, good for short hauls, was also proven at Bagdad.

Dickie is best remembered for field tests at the mine that resulted in improvements in earth-moving equipment. His life was sadly cut short by a heart attack in December of 1955.